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SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER TERM, 1953

No. 84

LOUIS H. NETZER,

Petitioner,

vs.

NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY,
A CORPORATION

PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE SUPREME COURT OF MINNESOTA AND BRIEF IN SUPPORT THEREOF.

HARRY H. PETERSON,
EUGENE A. RERAT,
WILLIAM A. TAUTGES,
FRANK L. BRADY,
Counsel for Petitioner.

INDEX

Subject Index

	Page
Petition for a writ of certiorari	1
Opinion below	1
Jurisdiction	1
Question presented	3
Statute involved	3
Statement of the facts	3
Specifications of error to be urged	6
Reasons for granting writ	7
Conclusion	8
Brief	9
Summary of argument	9
Argument	10
The interruption of the interstate transportation under a billing by a shipper in one state to a consignee in another of a freight car loaded with cargo, without changing the billing or unloading the cargo, for the purpose of making running repairs to enable the car to proceed on its journey under the original billing neither withdraws the car from nor terminates its use in such transportation, within the meaning of the Safety Appliance Act, United States Code Annotated, Title 45, Chapter 1, Section 11	11, 12
The duration of interstate transportation	12
Interruptions of interstate transportation	13
Engines	20
The errors in the decision below	23
Conclusion	25

Table of Cases Cited

Atlantic Coast Line R. Co. v. *Woods,* 4 Cir., 252 Fed. 428	20

	Page
Binderup v. *Pathe Exchange*, 263 U.S. 291	12
Bolch v. *C. M. & St. P. R. Co.*, 90 Wash. 47	10, 18
Brady v. *Terminal R. Assn.*, 303 U.S. 10	21
B. & O. R. Co. v. *Kast*, 6 Cir., 299 Fed. 419	20
B. & O. R. Co. v. *Hooven*, 297 Fed. 919	24
Caughey v. *Smith*, 47 N.Y. 244, 66 C.J.S. New Trial, Section 210	2
Central R. Co. of N.J. v. *Sharkey*, 2 Cir., 259 Fed. 144	9, 18
Champlain Realty Co. v. *Town of Brattleboro*, 260 U.S. 366	13
Coe v. *Errol*, 116 U.S. 517	12
Compton v. *So. Pac. Co.*, 70 Cal. Ap. (2d) 267	24
Cook v. *Southern R. Co.*, 109 S. Car. 377	10, 18
Cusson v. *C. P. R. Co.*, 2 Cir., 115 Fed. (2d) 430	21
C. M. & St. P. R. Co. v. *Volker*, 129 Fed. 522	9, 18
Delk v. *St. L. & S. Ste. M. R. Co.*, 220 U.S. 580	9, 16
Department of Banking v. *Pink*, 317 U.S. 64	2
Edwards v. *B. & O. R. Co.*, 7 Cir., 131 Fed. (2d) 366	20
Erie R. Co. v. *Russell*, 2 Cir., 183 Fed. 722	9, 18
Fort Street Union Depot Co. v. *Hiller*, 119 Fed. (2d) 307	21
Gospel Army v. *City of Los Angeles*, 331 U.S. 543	2
Great Northern R. Co. v. *Otos*, 239 U.S. 349	9, 16
Hines v. *Logan*, 4 Cir., 269 Fed. 105	9, 18
Hunt v. *Armour & Co.*, 345 Mo. 677, 136 S.W. (2d) 312	10, 18
Industrial Accident Commission v. *Davis*, 259 U.S. 182	15
Industrial Loan & Thrift Corp. v. *Benson*, 221 Minn. 70, 21 N.W. 99	2
Johnson v. *Southern Pacific R. Co.*, 196 U.S. 1	21
Kaminski v. *C. M. St. P. & P. R. Co.*, 180 Minn. 519	24
Lyle v. *Atchison, T. & S. F. R. Co.*, 177 Fed. (2d) 221	24
Myers v. *Reading Co.*, 331 U.S. 477	25
Mpls. St. P. & S. Ste. M. R. Co. v. *Goneau*, 269 U.S. 406	9, 16, 21
Mpls. & St. P. R. Co. v. *Winters*, 242 U.S. 353	14
Louis H. Netzer v. *Northern Pacific Railway Company, a Corporation*, 57 N.W. 2nd 247	1

Page

New Orleans & N.E. R. Co. v. *Jackson*, 140 Miss. 375 . . . 10, 18
N.Y. Cent. R. Co. v. *Marcone*, 281 U.S. 345 20
N.Y. C. & St. L. R. Co. v. *Kelly*, 70 Fed. (2d) 548 . . . 24
O'Brien v. *United States R. R. Adm.*, 194 App. Div. 63, 185 N.Y.S. 447 13
O'Donnell v. *Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Ry. Co.*, 338 U.S. 334 25
Republic Natural Gas Co. v. *State of Oklahoma*, 334 U.S. — 2
Richfield Oil Corp. v. *State Board of Equalization*, 329 U.S. 69 2
Sherry v. *B. & O. R. Co.*, 32 Fed. (2d) 487 24
Southern Pacific R. Co. v. *Industrial Accident Commission*, 19 Cal. (2d) 271 . . . . . 10, 18
U.S. v. *St. Louis-Southwestern Ry. Co. of Texas*, 4 Cir., 184 Fed. 28 . . . . . 22, 23
Wilkerson v. *McCarthy*, 336 U.S. 53, 93 L. Ed. 497 . . . 25
Yannish v. *N. Y. Cent. R. Co.*, 245 App. Div. 872, 282 N.Y.S. 129 . . . . . 10, 18

STATUTES AND OTHER AUTHORITIES CITED

Minnesota Statutes Annotated, Section 548.03 2
Safety Appliance Act, United States Code Annotated, Title 45, Chapter 1, Section 11 . . . . . 3, 4, 10
United States Code Annotated:
Title 28, Chapter 81 Section 1257(3) 1
Title 45, Chapter 1:
Section 11 . . . . . 3, 4, 10
Section 51, et seq. 3, 10

Violation of the Federal Safety Appliance Act, United States Code Annotated, Title 45, Chapter 1, Section 11 14
Violations of the Federal Employers' Liability Act, United States Code Annotated, Title 45, Chapter 1, Section 51 3

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

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LOUIS H. NETZER,

Petitioner,

vs.

NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY,

A CORPORATION

PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE SUPREME COURT OF MINNESOTA

To the Honorable the Chief Justice and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States:

Louis H. Netzer, by his attorneys, prays that a writ of certiorari issue to review the judgment of the Supreme Court of the State of Minnesota entered on February 20, 1953.

Opinion Below

The opinion of the Supreme Court of the State of Minnesota is reported in 57 N. W. (2d) 247. The opinion has not as yet been reported in the official state reports.

Jurisdiction

This Court has jurisdiction to review the judgment below under U. S. C. A., Title 28, Ch. 81, Sec. 1257(3) upon the ground that a right of petitioner under the statutes of the

United States was denied below. The judgment below was entered on February 20, 1953.

The decision of the Supreme Court of Minnesota affirming the trial court's decision herein is reviewable under Section 1257(3), *supra*, under the rule of cases such as:

Republic Natural Gas Co. v. *State of Oklahoma*, 334 U. S. 62;

Gospel Army v. *City of Los Angeles*, 331 U. S. 543;

Richfield Oil Corp. v. *State Board of Equalization*, 329 U. S. 69;

Department of Banking v. *Pink*, 317 U. S. 64;

for the reason that it is a final determination of the entire litigation between petitioner and respondent requiring the trial court upon mandate to enter judgment upon the verdict herein as a mere ministerial duty. The effect of the decision of the Supreme Court of Minnesota is a final determination of the litigation which leaves nothing further to be adjudicated or decided and concludes the case and all issues of law and fact therein in favor of respondent and against petitioner.

Under Minnesota Statutes Annotated, Sec. 548.03, it is the clerk's duty to enter judgment on the verdict. In fact, under the statute, a party is entitled to enter judgment where the verdict is against him.

Industrial Loan & Thrift Corp. v. *Benson*, 221 Minn. 70, 21 N. W. 99.

The affirmance of the trial court's decision by the Supreme Court of Minnesota constitutes an unconditional denial of the motion for a new trial which was made below and, operates to sustain the verdict and authorize immediate entry of judgment.

Caughey v. *Smith*, 47 N. Y. 244, 66 C. J. S. New Trial, Sec. 210.

Question Presented

Did the Supreme Court of Minnesota err in affirming a decision of the state trial court holding that the interruption of interstate transportation under a billing by a shipper in one state to a consignee in another of a freight car loaded with cargo, without changing the billing or unloading the cargo, for the purpose of making running repairs to enable the car to proceed on its journey with its cargo under the original billing, withdrew the car from and terminated its use in such transportation within the meaning of the Safety Appliance Act, U. S. C. A., Title 45, Ch. 1, Sec. 11?

Statute Involved

The statute here involved is the Safety Appliance Act, U. S. C. A., Title 45, Ch. 1, Sec. 11, which in part provides:

> "It shall be unlawful for any common carrier subject to the provisions of sections 1-16 of this title to haul, or permit to be hauled or used on its line, any car subject to the provisions of said sections not equipped with appliances provided for in Sections 11-16 of this title, to wit: All cars must be equipped with secure sill steps and efficient hand brakes; * * *."

Statement of the Facts

This action was brought by petitioner, as plaintiff below, to recover $125,000.00 for personal injuries sustained by him on December 25, 1948, while he was attempting to release a handbrake on a freight car in the yards of the Northern Pacific Railway Company at Missoula, Montana, as part of the job of repairing the car. He based his right of recovery upon two grounds, viz: (1) Violations of the Federal Employers' Liability Act, U. S. C. A., Ch. 1, Title 45, Sec. 51, *et seq.*, consisting of (a) failure to establish a reasonably safe system or method of work, (b) failure to

provide a sufficient number of competent employees to perform the work with reasonable safety to those engaged in doing it, and (c) failure to adopt and enforce reasonable rules and regulations for the performance of the work so as to avoid exposure of those so engaged to unnecessary and unreasonable risks and hazards; and, (2) Violation of the Federal Safety Appliance Act, U. S. C. A., Ch. 1, Title 45, Sec. 11, consisting of having a brake on the car, which it was necessary for petitioner to release, which was defective, not efficient and did not function properly.

The freight car in question was a Santa Fe freight car loaded with sulphur, which was billed and destined for Trentwood, Washington, and had been hauled by the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company (herein referred to as C. B. & Q.) over its lines to Laurel, Montana, where on December 23, 1948, it was delivered to the Northern Pacific Railway Company, the respondent. Northern Pacific hauled the car in a freight train to Missoula, Montana, arriving there on December 24, 1948, at 7:55 a. m., where it was taken off the train for repairs, and thereafter on December 25, 1948, at 6:15 p. m. approximately 35 hours afterward, Northern Pacific resumed hauling the car to Trentwood, Washington, its destination, according to the billing thereof (R. p. 20, f. 31).

The car was taken out of the train at Missoula to replace some defective wheels thereon. Such a wheel change takes a repair crew about one and one-half hours (R. p. 28, f. 44).

In order to do this work, the car was taken out of the train and set on a "rip" or repair track as the place where the work was to be done. The rip track is kept locked so other cars and engines cannot be moved therein without first notifying those working thereon.

The billing and routing of the car were not changed. The cargo was not unloaded. The end of the loaded car was to be raised up and the old defective wheels were to be pulled

out and new wheels put on the car, and then the end was to be lowered in place to complete the operation. This was actually done (R. pp. 40-41-42, 244-245, ff. 61-62-63, 544-548). If the brake on the car is set, it is necessary to release it in order to enable the repairmen to get the wheels off (R. pp. 66-67-68, 244-245, ff. 101-103, 548-549). If a brake is functioning properly, there is no danger incident to releasing it (R. pp. 77-78, ff. 117-118).

Petitioner's duties were to replace defective wheels and not to repair defective brakes concerning which he knew nothing. Petitioner went upon the car pursuant to orders from his crew foreman to release the brake which was set "terrifically on" (R. pp. 41-42, ff. 62-63). While the petitioner was making his third attempt to release the brake, the wheel on the brake suddenly spun so violently that it threw petitioner off the brake platform to the ground fourteen feet below, causing the injuries for which he sought to recover in this action (R. pp. 45-46, 48-49, ff. 68-69, 73-74). The brake did not operate in the regular and usual manner. It was the first experience of this kind petitioner ever had (R. p. 45, f. 69). The testimony of competent witnesses was to the effect that the brake was not in normal operating condition and that such condition was due to some defect in the brake mechanism (R. pp. 103-104, 107, 112, 113, 223, ff. 228-233, 240, 241, 516). As stated, after the repairs had been completed, the car left Missoula for Trentwood on December 25, 1948 at 6:15 p. m.

The evidence on behalf of petitioner established that, in violation of the usual custom and practice of respondent, it left the car in question on the "rip" track with the brake on very tight instead of off, with blocks to hold the car in place, and of the custom to provide an adequate number of men to do the repair job (R. pp. 41, 114, 137, 193, ff. 62, 63, 244, 389, 472); and also that respondent, pursuant to the usual custom and practice, failed to give petitioner timely

notice and warning that the handbrake was defective, inefficient and inoperative (R. p. 130, f. 379).

In the trial court, petitioner, as plaintiff, requested the court to instruct the jury as a matter of law that respondent violated the Safety Appliance Act upon the ground that said brake was not efficient (R. pp. 308, 309, 310, 312, 313, ff. 643, 644, 645, 646, 648, 649) and, if the foregoing instruction were denied, to submit to the jury as a question of fact whether respondent violated the Safety Appliance Act by having the car in question equipped with a handbrake which was not efficient (R. p. 310, f. 646). As part of such instructions, petitioner requested the trial court to charge that if the court held as a matter of law or if the jury found as a fact that there was a violation of the Safety Appliance Act, petitioner was entitled to recover whatever damages he sustained. The question of negligence under the Federal Employers' Liability Act, aside from those relating to liability under the Safety Appliance Act, were submitted to the jury for its decision.

After verdict for respondent, petitioner moved for a new trial upon the grounds, among others, that the trial court erred in refusing to give petitioner's requested instructions relative to the application of the Safety Appliance Act to the facts of this case (R. pp. 318-320, ff. 658-661).

Error was assigned in the Supreme Court of Minnesota raising the questions whether the Safety Appliance Act applied in this case and whether petitioner was entitled to recover for respondent's violations thereof. The decision of both the Supreme Court of Minnesota and the trial court was adverse to petitioner.

Specifications of Error to Be Urged

1. The trial court erred in refusing to submit to the jury the question whether petitioner was entitled to recover upon

the ground that the car upon which he was required to work was equipped with a defective, inefficient and inoperative handbrake.

2. The Supreme Court of Minnesota erred in affirming the decision of the trial court that petitioner was not entitled to have submitted to the jury the question whether he was entitled to recover under the Safety Appliance Act upon the ground that respondent required petitioner to work upon a car which was equipped with a defective, inefficient and inoperative handbrake.

3. The Supreme Court of Minnesota erred in affirming the decision of the trial court.

Reasons for Granting Writ

1. The Supreme Court of Minnesota by the decision below has decided a question of substance not heretofore determined by this Court.

2. That the Supreme Court of Minnesota has decided such question in a way which is not in accord with the applicable decisions of this Court.

3. That the Supreme Court of Minnesota has decided such question contrary to the overwhelming weight of authority.

4. That the Supreme Court of Minnesota by its decision failed to give due weight to the fact that the replacement of the wheels on the freight car in question was a mere running repair during which the car was kept in actual use and was not withdrawn from interstate transportation.

5. The question to be decided is an important one to men engaged as employees in the railroad business; and, if the decision below should stand, many employees in similar cases would be unjustly deprived of the right to recover.

6. That the decision below deprives petitioner of the right

to recover under the Safety Appliance Act and thereby deprives him of an important right under a federal statute.

Conclusion

The writ of certiorari should be granted not only to accord to petitioner important rights which he has under the federal statutes mentioned, but also to establish a precedent under which others similarly situated may have similar rights accorded to them.

Respectfully submitted,

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SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER TERM, 1953

No. 84

LOUIS H. NETZER,

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NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY,
A CORPORATION

BRIEF IN SUPPORT OF A PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE SUPREME COURT OF MINNESOTA.

Summary of Argument

The car in question was being used in interstate commerce because the interstate movement had not been terminated but had only been interrupted and the repairs were made during the interruption while the car was under interstate billing and while it was loaded with its cargo.

Delk v. *St. L. & S. F. R. Co.*, 220 U. S. 580;
Mpls. St. P. and S. Ste. M. R. v. *Goneau*, 269 U. S. 406;
Great Northern R. Co. v. *Otos*, 239 U. S. 349.
C. M. & St. P. R. Co. v. *Volker*, 129 Fed. 522;
Erie R. Co. v. *Russell*, 2 Cir., 183 Fed. 722;
Hines v. *Logan*, 4 Cir., 269 Fed. 105;
Central R. Co. of N. J. v. *Sharkey*, 2 Cir., 259 Fed. 144;

Southern Pacific R. Co. v. *Industrial Accident Commission,* 19 Cal. (2d) 271;
New Orleans & N. E. R. Co. v. *Jackson,* 140 Miss. 375;
Hunt v. *Armour & Co.,* 345 Mo. 677, 136 S. W. (2d) 312;
Yannish v. *N. Y. Cent. R. Co.,* 245 App. Div. 872, 282 N. Y. S. 129;
Cook v. *Southern R. Co.,* 109 S. Car. 377;
Bolch v. *C. M. & St. P. R. Co.,* 90 Wash. 47.

Argument

Petitioner depended for right of recovery: (1) Upon respondent's negligence consisting of violations of the Federal Employers' Liability Act, U. S. C. A., Ch. 1, Title 45, Sec. 51, et seq., which were (a) failure to establish a reasonably safe system or method of work, (b) failure to provide a sufficient number of competent employees to perform the work with reasonable safety to those engaged in doing it, and (c) failure to adopt and enforce reasonable rules and regulations for the performance of the work so as to avoid exposure of those so engaged to unnecessary and unreasonable risks and hazards; and, (2) Violation of the Federal Safety Appliance Act, U. S. C. A. Ch. 1, Title 45, Sec. 11, consisting of having a brake on the car, which it was necessary for petitioner to release, which was defective, not efficient and did not function properly.

We take it, in view of the facts which have been stated and of the further fact that the trial judge submitted to the jury the question of respondent's negligence and liability to petitioner under the Federal Employers' Liability Act (U. S. C. A., Title 45, Ch. 1, Sec. 51, et seq.), that it may be taken as an established fact in the case that the question of respondent's liability to petitioner under the Federal Employers' Liability Act was a question of fact.

In view of the fact that petitioner claimed that respond-

ent was liable for violation of the Safety Appliance Act by reason of the brake on the car in question being defective, inefficient and inoperative, a statement of the issues with respect to the application of the statute should be made. The statute, so far as here material, provides:

> "It shall be unlawful for any common carrier subject to the provisions of sections 1-16 of this title to haul, or permit to be hauled or used on its line, any car subject to the provisions of said sections not equipped with appliances provided for in sections 11-16 of this title, to wit: All cars must be equipped with secure sill steps and efficient hand brakes; * * *."

Respondent's contention in the lower courts was that the car in question was not within the Safety Appliance Act for the reasons that it had been "withdrawn" from interstate transportation, because it was not being "hauled" or "used" on its line at the time petitioner was injured in attempting to release the brake. The courts below further held, in accordance with respondent's contentions, that the car in question had been "withdrawn" from interstate transportation by reason of the fact that it had been placed on the "rip" or repair track for repairs. Petitioner's contention was that the interruption for such repairs was simply an incident of the interstate journey and that the car was both being "hauled" and "used" by reason of the fact that the repair work was made for the purpose of enabling the car to go in interstate commerce and involved only an interruption thereof without changing the interstate billing and without unloading the interstate cargo of the car in question while the repairs were being made. This brings us to the one and only question to be decided in this case.

THE INTERRUPTION OF THE INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION UNDER A BILLING BY A SHIPPER IN ONE STATE TO A

CONSIGNEE IN ANOTHER OF A FREIGHT CAR LOADED WITH CARGO, WITHOUT CHANGING THE BILLING OR UNLOADING THE CARGO, FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING RUNNING REPAIRS TO ENABLE THE CAR TO PROCEED ON ITS JOURNEY UNDER THE ORIGINAL BILLING NEITHER WITHDRAWS THE CAR FROM NOR TERMINATES ITS USE IN SUCH TRANSPORTATION, WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE SAFETY APPLIANCE ACT, U.S.C.A., TITLE 45, CHAPTER 1, SECTION 11.

The Duration of Interstate Transportation

Interstate transportation begins when goods are delivered to a carrier for interstate transportation and ends when the goods are delivered to the consignee. Many decisions of this Court discuss the matter and have settled the rule as we have stated it.

Coe v. *Errol,* 116 U. S. 517

In *Binderup* v. *Pathe Exchange,* 263 U. S. 291, 309-310, this Court said:

> "1. The film contracts were between residents of different states contemplated the leasing by one to the other of a commodity manufactured in one state and transported and to be transported to and used in another. The business of the distributors of which the arrangement with the exhibitor here was an instance, was clearly interstate. It consisted of manufacturing the commodity in one state, finding customers for it in other states, making contracts of lease with them, and transporting the commodity leased from the state of manufacture into the states of the lessees. If the commodity were consigned directly to the lessees, the interstate character of the commerce throughout would not be disputed. Does the circumstance that in the course of the process the commodity is consigned to a local agency of the distributors, to be by that agency held until delivery to the lessee in the same state, put an end to the interstate character of the transaction and transform it into one purely intrastate? We think not. The intermediate delivery to the agency did not end and was not intended to end the movement of the

> commodity. It was merely halted as a convenient stop in the process of getting it to its final destination. The general rule is that where transportation has acquired an interstate character 'it continues at least until the load reaches the point where the parties originally intended that the movement should finally end'. *Illinois Central R. R. Co.* v. *Louisiana R. R. Comm.*, 236 U. S. 157, 163. And see *Western Union Tel. Co.* v. *Foster*, 247 U. S. 105, 113; *Western Oil Refining Co.* v. *Lipscomb*, 244 U. S. 346, 349."

A freight car used to transport cargo is in interstate or intrastate commerce according to whether its cargo is in course of transportation in the one or the other.

> *O'Brien* v. *United States R. R. Adm.*, 194 App. Div. 63, 185 N. Y. S. 447.

In the O'Brien case, *supra*, a freight car loaded with freight being hauled in interstate commerce was stopped and placed in storage pending a change of locomotive. The Court said:

> " * * * a car is interstate or intrastate according as its cargo is in course of transportation to points within or without the state * * *."
>
> The "stop was a mere interruption of an interstate journey already begun."

Interruptions of Interstate Transportation

In *Coe* v. *Errol, supra*, this Court settled the rule to be that the interstate movement is regarded as continuing despite temporary interruptions because of the necessities of the journey.

In *Champlain Realty Co.* v. *Town of Brattleboro*, 260 U. S. 366, this Court applied the rule in holding that the movement of the goods for purposes of safety and convenience does not terminate the interstate transportation thereof. In that case, logs were held during high water to insure safety of the journey.

> "The interstate commerce clause of the Constitution does not give immunity to movable property from local taxation which is not discriminative unless it is in actual continuous transit in interstate commerce. When it is shipped by a common carrier from one state to another, in the course of such an uninterrupted journey, it is clearly immune. The doubt arises when there are interruptions in the journey, and when the property, in its transportation, is under the complete control of the owner during the passage. *If the interruptions are only to promote the safe or convenient transit, then the continuity of the interstate trip is not broken.*"

In determining whether an instrumentality of commerce was used in interstate commerce within the meaning of the Federal Employers' Liability Act (U.S.C.A., Title 45, Section 51, et seq.; id. Section 11) the rule stated in the foregoing cases has been applied. The rule is that a freight car is in interstate commerce from the time that it is loaded with the goods which are to be transported in interstate commerce until the car has been delivered to the consignee with its cargo and that any temporary interruptions of the interstate movement for purposes of convenience or to facilitate it, as for example, to protect the shipment or to repair the car, do not withdraw the shipment from interstate commerce nor terminate the interstate transportation.

In *Mpls. & St. L. R. Co.* v. *Winters,* 242 U. S. 353, the question was whether a locomotive, which had been placed in a roundhouse for repairs but which was not destined for any particular service thereafter, was being used in interstate commerce. Mr. Justice Holmes there pointed out that if the engine was being used in interstate commerce and that the repairs were a mere interruption thereof, the engine was being used in interstate commerce, but not otherwise. The evidence did not show that the engine was then engaged in

an interstate haul and that the repairs were made as an interruption thereof. The Court said:

> "It (the engine) was not interrupted in an interstate haul to be repaired and go on."

In *Industrial Accident Commission* v. *Davis,* 259 U. S. 182, the question was whether an engine which had been placed in a repair shop on December 1, 1918 for a general overhauling was being used in interstate commerce. The overhauling job was completed on February 25, 1919, or 87 days after the work began. The plaintiff was injured on January 31, 1919. There the Court said:

> "We refrain from a review of our cases. They pronounce a test and illustrate it. We are called upon to apply it to the present controversy. The Federal act gives redress only for injuries received in interstate commerce. But how determine the commerce? Commerce is movement, and the work and general repair shops of a railroad, and those employed in them, are accessories to that movement,—indeed, are necessary to it; but so are all attached to the railroad company,—official, clerical, or mechanical. Against such a broad generalization of relation we, however, may instantly pronounce, and successively against lesser ones, until we come to the relation of the employment to the actual operation of the instrumentalities for a distinction between commerce and no commerce. In other words, we are brought to a consideration of degrees, and the test declared, that the employee, at the time of the injury, must be engaged in interstate transportation or in work so closely related to it as to be practically a part of it, in order to displace state jurisdiction and make applicable the Federal act. And there is a difference in the instrumentalities. In some, the tracks, bridges, and roadbed and equipment in actual use, may be said to have definite character, and give it to those employed upon them. But equipment out of use, withdrawn for repairs, may or may not partake of that char-

acter, according to circumstances; and among the circumstances is the time taken for repairs,—the duration of the withdrawal from use. Illustrations readily occur. There may be only a placement upon a sidetrack or in a roundhouse,—the interruption of actual use, and the return to it, being of varying lengths of time, or there may be a removal to the repair and construction shops, a definite withdrawal from service and placement in new relations,—the relations of a workshop,—its employments and employees having cause in the movements that constitute commerce, but not being immediate to it.

"And it is this separation that gives character to the employment, as we have said, as being in or not in commerce. Such, we think, was the situation of the engine in the present case. It was placed in the shop for general repairs on December 19, 1918. On February 25, 1919, after work upon it, it was given a trial, and it was placed in service on March 4, 1919. The accident occurred on February 1st of that year, the engine at the time being nearly stripped and dismantled. 'It was not interrupted in an interstate haul to be repaired and go on.'"

In many cases this Court has indicated that a freight car loaded with cargo in interstate transportation is being used in interstate transportation while the journey is being interrupted for the purpose of making repairs on the car, without expressly holding that such is the fact.

Delk v. *St. L. & S. F. R. Co.*, 220 U. S. 580;
Mpls., St. P. and S. Ste. M. R. v. *Goneau*, 269 U. S. 406;
Great Northern R. Co. v. *Otos*, 239 U. S. 349.

In the *Delk* case, *supra*, the plaintiff was injured in attempting to couple a freight car loaded with lumber on a side track for repairs to a string of cars used in a switching movement. This Court held that the car was being used in interstate traffic when the plaintiff was injured. In the opinion, it cites with approval the opinions of Judge

Severens and Judge Richards in the Court of Appeals. It quotes Judge Severens as stating:

> "But we are inclined to think otherwise. Its cargo had not reached its destination, and was not then ready for the delivery to the consignee, wherewith the commerce would have ended. Its stoppage in the yard was an incident to the transportation. The injury to the coupler was one easily repaired without being taken to a repair ship, and the car was being hauled upon the track when the accident occurred."

It quotes Judge Richards as stating:

> "This is a case peculiarly within the provisions of the act. A car loaded and being used in moving interstate traffic was found with a defective coupler."

In the *Goneau* case, *supra,* the question was whether a car which had to be taken out of train because it had a defective coupler which made it impossible to attach it to the other cars was being used in interstate commerce. This Court said:

> "Under the circumstances indicated it is clear that the use of the defective car had not ended at the time of the accident, although it was then motionless. A defective car is still in use when it has been moved with the train from the main line to a siding, to be cut out and left so that the other cars may proceed on their journey. Chicago G. W. R. Co. v. Schendel, 267 U. S. 287, 291, 69 L. Ed. 614, 617, 45 Sup. Ct. Rep. 303. And so it is while still in a section of the train on the main line, to be coupled up and proceed on its journey as a part of the train."

In the *Otos* case, *supra,* where a freight car loaded with cargo was taken out of a train to be put on a side track for repairs and then to go on to its destination, this Court said:

> "The car was loaded and in fact was carried to Minneapolis the next day. It had not been withdrawn from

interstate commerce, but merely subjected to a delay in carrying it to its destination."

In numerous cases both the federal and state courts have held that freight cars hauled as part of interstate trains and temporarily placed on side tracks for repairs or to await further transportation to a point where repairs were to be made were being used in interstate commerce, while the cars were so standing.

C. M. & St. P. R. Co. v. *Volker,* 129 Fed. 522;
Erie R. Co. v. *Russell,* 2 Cir., 183 Fed. 722;
Hines v. *Logan,* 4 Cir., 269 Fed. 105;
Central R. Co. of N. J. v. *Sharkey,* 2 Cir., 259 Fed. 144;
Southern Pacific R. Co. v. *Industrial Accident Commission,* 19 Cal. (2d) 271;
New Orleans & N.E. R. Co. v. *Jackson,* 140 Miss. 375;
Hunt v. *Armour & Co.,* 345 Mo. 677, 136 S.W. (2d) 312;
Yannish v. *N.Y. Cent. R. Co.,* 245 App. Div. 872, 282, N.Y.S. 129;
Cook v. *Southern R. Co.,* 109 S. Car. 377;
Bolch v. *C. M. & St. P. R. Co.,* 90 Wash. 47.

A few illustrations of the application of the rule will suffice. In the *Sharkey* case, *supra,* where a repairman was sent to repair a car on a side track as a rush job so that it could be hauled from Bayonne, New Jersey, to Philadelphia, and the car had to be taken out of the train and wait on a side track so the repairs could be made, the court stated (259 Fed. 148) that a car

> "whose interstate movement is arrested to permit repairs fitting it to reach its destination is not by reason of such delay withdrawn from interstate commerce."

In the *Yannish* case, *supra,* which is on all fours with the instant case, a freight car loaded with wheat was set

out for repairs consisting of changing a journal box, the court said:

> "The original loading and billing of the car was not changed, and the contents remained undisturbed." Held that the car was being used in interstate commerce.

In the *Jackson* case, *supra,* where a car loaded with lumber was set on a side track to make repairs so that it could proceed with the journey, did proceed with the journey after the repairs were made. Plaintiff there was injured by using a defective handhold, a violation of the Safety Appliance Act. The Court said (140 Miss. 375):

> "It is true that, while the car on which appellee was injured was not, at the particular time of the injury, actually moving in commerce, nevertheless the stopping of it under the circumstances in appellant's repair yards at Meridian, in our opinion, was simply a step in interstate commerce. The car came into Meridian loaded. When its bad order was discovered it was switched into appellant's repair yards, with the same load, where it was repaired, without being unloaded, and went out in a few hours on its journey to its destination. It cannot be said with reason that the car had ceased to be a commercial car. The evidence fairly shows that appellant had received the car, not primarily for repairs, but for transportation; that the necessary repairs were made that the car might be carried by appellant to its destination. *The repair of the car was mere incident. The dominating thing was the carrying of the car by appellant over its line of road to New Orleans. We think not only the language of the Safety Appliance Act applies to the facts of this case, but they come within the reason and purpose of the act.* It follows from these views that the trial court did not err in directing a verdict for appellee on the question of liability."

In the *Hunt* case, *supra,* running repairs were made at the Kansas City plant of Armour & Company on refrigerator cars used in hauling goods in interstate commerce. These repairs consisted of installing new couplers, new wheels, fixing roofs, fixing brake beams, and the like. The plaintiff there was injured while making a change of wheels on a refrigerator car on a side track. The job, the same as the one in the instant case, required about an hour and a half. Mr. Justice Hyde, speaking for the Court said:

> "It has been frequently ruled that temporarily diverting a car or engine from its regular use for the purpose of making running repairs does not withdraw it from its interstate use or break the continuity of such use."

In the *Bolch* case, *supra,* a car loaded with lumber under billing from Tacoma, Washington, to Aberdeen, South Dakota was placed on the railroad's side track in its yards in Tacoma for repairs. The repairs were made while the car was so billed and loaded. The court held that the car was being used in interstate commerce and said (90 Wash. 53):

> "If so loaded, that fact fixed its status as an interstate car. The interstate transportation, to which it was then devoted, was not ended merely because the car had become temporarily disabled and was placed upon the repair track where it was waiting its turn for repairs. While so placed and waiting, it was still in interstate commerce."

Engines

The foregoing rules have been applied in numerous cases involving engines.

N. Y. Central R. Co. v. *Marcone,* 281 U. S. 345;
Edwards v. *B. & O. R. Co.,* 7 Cir., 131 Fed. (2d) 366;
Atlantic Coast Line R. Co. v. *Woods,* 4 Cir., 252 Fed. 428;
B. & O. R. Co., v. *Kast,* 6 Cir., 299 F. 419.

In the *Kast* case, *supra,* the engine was held to be used in interstate commerce, because, while it was in the round house for repairs, it was "bulletined" to go out the same day.

In the *Woods* case, *supra,* in holding that the engine there involved was being used in interstate commerce, the court distinguished the *Winters* case and said (252 Fed. 432, 433):

> "The case at bar, as we have stated, is distinguishable from the cases relied upon by counsel for plaintiff, inasmuch as the engine was taken out of interstate commerce for the express purpose that it might be repaired to enable it to continue as an instrument of interstate commerce. In other words, it is easily distinguished from the Winters case because the character of the work in which the engine in this instance was employed did not depend 'upon remote possibilities or upon accidental later events'. It appears from the evidence that Engine 88 was regularly engaged in hauling interstate passenger trains, operating under a rule of the road by which it reached Florence every three days. It further appears that on the day plaintiff was injured this engine was taken out of the Columbia-Wilmington train in order that the U-bolt in question might be repaired. It also appears that the engine was placed in the shop and sent out upon the same day on its regular run, hauling what is known as the Columbia-Wilmington train."

It is not necessary that a car be moving in order to be in interstate transportation.

Brady v. *Terminal R. Assn.*, 303 U. S. 10;
Mpls. St. P. & S. Ste. M. R. Co., v. *Goneau*, 269 U. S. 406, *supra.;*
Johnson v. *Southern Pacific R. Co.*, 196 U.S. 1;
Fort Street Union Depot Co. v. *Hiller*, 119 F. (2d) 307;
Cusson v. *C. P. R. Co.*, 2 Cir., 115 Fed. (2d) 430.

In the *Brady* case, *supra,* this Court held that a car standing on a sidetrack while being inspected was being used in interstate transportation.

In the *Johnson* case, *supra,* dining car standing on a side track prepared for an interstate trip and awaiting to be picked up by an interstate train was held to be in interstate commerce.

In the case of *Fort Street Union Depot Co., supra,* a club car standing on a side track awaiting to be picked up by an interstate train was held to be in interstate commerce. An employee injured by reason of a defective handhold was held to be under the Safety Appliance Act and entitled to recover thereunder.

In the *Cusson* case, *supra,* a Delaware car was standing on a side track coupled to a car which was to be picked up by an interstate train. In separating the cars it became necessary to set the handbrake on the Delaware car in order to prevent it from moving. The plaintiff was injured by reason of the defective brake. Circuit Judge Learned Hand said (115 Fed. 432):

> "Certainly the defendant 'used' the brake upon the Delaware car for its own purposes; that was necessary to prevent the Delaware car's 'drifting' down the track after the Boston and Maine car had been uncoupled. The argument must therefore be that a 'use' of the brake was not a 'use' of the car, which is not only verbally untrue but it disregards the whole underlying purpose of the act."
>
> "The fact that the Delaware car was not in motion does not of course mean that it was not in 'use' (Minneapolis, St. P. & S. Ste. M. Ry. Co. v. Goneau, 269 U. S. 406, 46 S.Ct. 129, 70 L.Ed. 335), but it is arguable whether the only 'use' of it was not the Boston and Maine's which was in possession of it at the time and was to take it to its destination."

So it was here. Plaintiff was injured while using the handbrake on the car in question while the interstate movement was interrupted.

In this connection, it is to be remembered that the statute uses both the words "hauled" and "used". In *U. S.* v. *St.*

Louis-Southwestern Ry. Co. of Texas, 4 Cir., 184 Fed. 28, the Court of Appeals pointed out this difference in the following language:

> "The penalty is imposed by Section 6 when the car is 'hauled or used'. Is the defendant's contention true, that a hauling is absolutely necessary to complete the offense? The statute forbids hauling and using. Why were both words used? If the car was fully loaded and on the track ready to be started as a part of an interstate train, with engine attached and fired, and requiring only the touch of the engineer to start, would not the car be 'used' or in use, within the statute before it was hauled? If it was without the automatic coupler, so that the brakeman would have to go between the cars to couple them, it would clearly be within the mischief the statute was intended to prevent. 'Used' has other meanings than 'hauled.' It is a broader word. To haul is to use, but may not a car be used within the statutory meaning otherwise than by being hauled? This question is not necessarily involved so as to require its decision, and is only relevant as bearing on the soundness of the defendant's contention, for in the instant case all three of the defective cars were, in fact, hauled."

So here, not only as a matter of well established principle, but according to the Safety Appliance Act itself, it is clear that there may be use which does not involve movement. Holding the car under its interstate billing and keeping its cargo on the car during the repairs constituted "use", as well as "hauling".

The Errors in the Decision Below

The fundamental error in the decision below is that it failed to recognize that the car in question remained in interstate commerce from the time it was picked up by the C. B. & Q. R. Co. until it was delivered to the consignee in Trentwood, Washington, and that the interruption of

the journey at Missoula for the purpose of replacing the defective wheels was but a mere incident in such transportation, made for the purpose of enabling such transportation to continue. The court also failed to recognize the fact that during the time the interstate movement was so interrupted, the car remained under its original billing and its cargo was unloaded. While the car was not moving, it still contained its cargo and that in itself constituted a separate and subordinate use thereof in interstate transportation. Interruption of the movement of the car in question for such repairs was no different than that of an autoist stopping at a filling station to have a wheel or tire repaired.

It is respectfully submitted that the Minnesota court misconstrued the decision of this Court of *Delk* v. *St. L. & S. F. R. Co.*, 220 U. S. 580, *supra*. The cases of *Lyle* v. *Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co.*, 177 F. 2d 221; *B. & O. R. Co.* v. *Hooven*, 297 F. 919 and *Compten* v. *So. Pac. Co.*, 70 Cal. Ap. 2d 267, cited below, are different for the reason that they involved locomotives which were not under billing or assignment to any particular service after the repairs to be made on them had been completed. The case of *Sherry* v. *B. & O. R. Co.*, 32 F. 2d 487, is not in point because that involved an empty freight car which had been withdrawn from service and had not been kept in service as the one here was. In *N. Y. C. & St. L. R. Co.* v. *Kelly*, 70 F. 2d 548, it appeared that the car was on a side track for repairs of safety appliances and that the plaintiff was injured by reason thereof. The car in question was empty and not loaded, was not under any definite billing and so far as the record was concerned was not destined to return to any particular interstate transportation. The case of *Kaminski* v. *C. M. St. P. & P. R. Co.*, 180 Minn. 519, is not in point for the reason that that involved repairs of a freight car in a repair yard. The repairs there consisted of entirely dismantling

the car and practically rebuilding it. The car itself was not destined for any particular service after the repair job was completed. Here, unlike the *Kaminski* case, the car was kept in service during the repairs under the original billing and loading.

Conclusion

The refusal of the trial court to submit to the jury plaintiff's alleged right to recover under the Safety Appliance Act, and the decision of the Supreme Court of Minnesota affirming the trial court's determinations, denied to plaintiff a substantial federal right. Under the numerous decisions which we have cited above, plaintiff made out a case for the jury and was entitled to have the issue passed on by the jury.

This Court further held in numerous similar cases.

Myers v. *Reading Co.*, 331 U. S. 477;

O'Donnell v. *Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Ry. Co.*, 338 U. S. 334;

Wilkerson v. *McCarthy*, 336 U. S. 53, 93 L. Ed. 497, and other similar cases.

It is clear that the decision below of the Supreme Court of Minnesota and the authorities which it cites as in support of its views are unsound in principle and opposed to the overwhelming weight of authority. In affirming the decision of the trial court, the Supreme Court of Minnesota erred for the same reasons. Therefore, your petitioner is entitled to a new trial in order that his federal rights under the Safety Appliance Act may be accorded to him.

Respectfully submitted,

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AUG 10 1953

HAROLD B. WILLEY, C

IN THE

Supreme Court of the United States

OCTOBER TERM, 1953

NO. 84

LOUIS H. NETZER,

Petitioner,

vs.

NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY,
a corporation,

Respondent.

BRIEF OF RESPONDENT IN OPPOSITION TO PETITION FOR CERTIORARI

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INDEX

	Page
Opinions Below	1
Question Presented	1
Statute Involved	2
Statement	2
Argument	4
After a defective car is temporarily removed from the carrier's line and reaches the place of repair, the provisions of the Safety Appliance Act are inapplicable	4
The fact that the freight car involved in this case contained an interstate shipment which had not yet reached its destination is wholly immaterial	10
Cases arising under the Safety Appliance Act should not be confused with those arising under the Federal Employes' Liability Act	13
Reasons why the writ should be denied	14
Conclusion	15

CITATIONS

Cases:

	Page
Atlantic Coast Line R. Co. v. Edge, 81 Ga. App. 606, 59 S. E. 2d 533	5
Baltimore & O. R. Co. v. Hooven (CCA 6th), 297 F. 919	5, 7, 8, 10
Brady v. Terminal R. R. Assn., 303 U. S. 10	8, 11
Chi., Burlington & Q. R. R. v. Harrington, 241 U. S. 177	13
Chicago, M. & St. P. Ry. Co. v. Voelker (8 Cir.), 129 F. 522	13
Compton v. Southern Pac. Co., 70 Cal. App. 2d 267, 161 P. 2d 40	5

Cusson v. Canadian Pac. Ry. Co. (CCA 2nd), 115 F. 2d 430 14
Delk v. St. Louis & San Francisco R. R., 220 U. S. 580 13
Erie R. Co. v. Russell (2 Cir.), 183 F. 722 14
Great Northern Ry. Co. v. Otos, 239 U. S. 349 13
Kaminski v. Chicago, M. St. P. & P. R. Co., 180 Minn. 519, 231 N. W. 189, certiorari denied 282 U. S. 872, 51 S. Ct. 78, 75 L. Ed. 770 5
Lyle v. Atchison, T. & S. F. Ry. Co. (C. A. 7th), 177 F. 2d 221, certiorari denied 339 U. S. 913 .....9, 12
McCalmont v. Pennsylvania R. Co. (CCA 6th), 283 F. 736 ..... 5, 7
Minneapolis, St. P. & S. Ste. M. R. v. Goneau, 269 U. S. 406 13
Netzer v. Northern Pac. Ry. Co., 57 N. W. (2d) 247 1
New Orleans & N. E. R. Co. v. Jackson, 140 Miss. 375, 105 So. 770 14
New York, C. & St. L. R. Co. v. Kelly (CCA 7th), 70 F. 2d 548, certiorari denied 293 U. S. 595, 55 S. Ct. 110, 79 L. Ed. 689 .....5, 8, 12
Shanks v. Del., Lack. & West. R. R., 239 U. S. 556 13
Sherry v. Baltimore & O. R. Co. (CCA 6th), 30 F. 2d 487, certiorari denied 280 U. S. 555, 50 S. Ct. 16, 74 L. Ed. 611 ..... 5, 6
So. Pac. Co. v. Industrial Accident Comm., 251 U. S. 259 13
Southern Ry. Co. v. United States, 222 U. S. 20 10
Texas & Pacific Ry. Co. v. Rigsby, 241 U. S. 33 10

Statutes:

Federal Employers' Liability Act, 45 U. S. C. A., § 51, et seq. 4, 13, 15
Federal Safety Appliance Act, 45 U. S. C. A., § 11 ....2, 14
Federal Safety Appliance Act, 45 U. S. C. A., § 13 12

IN THE

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NO. 84

LOUIS H. NETZER,

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BRIEF OF RESPONDENT IN OPPOSITION TO PETITION FOR CERTIORARI

OPINIONS BELOW

The opinion of the trial court (R. 327-331) was not reported. The opinion of the Supreme Court of the State of Minnesota (R. 333-344) is reported at 57 N. W. (2d) 247.

QUESTION PRESENTED

Was the petitioner (a car repairman) entitled to the protection of the Safety Appliance Act while engaged in repairing a freight car standing on a locked repair track in a repair yard devoted exclusively to the repair of bad order cars merely because the car contained an interstate shipment which had not yet reached its destination?

STATUTE INVOLVED

The statute involved is Sec. 11 of the Safety Appliance Act which provides in part as follows:

> "It shall be unlawful for any common carrier * * * to haul, or permit to be hauled or used on its line, any car * * * not equipped with * * * efficient hand brakes;" U. S. C. A. Title 45, Ch. 1, Sec. 11.

STATEMENT

This is a personal injury case. Petitioner, a car repairman employed by respondent, brought suit to recover damages for personal injuries sustained by him on December 25, 1948, when he fell from a brake platform of a box car at Missoula, Montana.

The car from which petitioner fell had been taken out of the train and was on a locked repair track undergoing repairs when the accident happened (R. 20, 34, 78). The car had a defective pair of wheels and petitioner and another car repairman, one Bailey, were directed to change the wheels. Bailey went under the car, and petitioner ascended the side ladder for the purpose of reaching the brake platform and was in the act of releasing the hand brake when he fell to the ground and was injured.

Petitioner had worked as a car repairman's helper and as step-up car repairman a total of six years and was familiar with hand brakes and the customary method and procedure of operating them (R. 42). Petitioner testified that when he reached the brake platform, he shoved over the release lever as far as it was intended to go (R. 43, 44). When the brake did not release, he attempted to work the brake wheel

in a clockwise direction to get it loose. It is often necessary to pull up on the brake wheel in this manner to cause a brake to release (R. 142, 166, 167, 214, 215). He then made two unsuccessful attempts to loosen the brake by pulling up on the brake wheel and was about to make a third attempt when suddenly the wheel spun and he fell from the platform to the ground (R. 44, 45).

All hand brake wheels spin when the brake is released, and this is a fact which the person operating such a brake will naturally anticipate. On the top of the box car, in the vicinity of the hand brake, a handhold was provided for the purpose of permitting a person attempting to release the brake to hold on with his left hand while operating the brake wheel with his right hand. Respondent contended that petitioner was himself negligent in not holding on to the handhold with his left hand and that if he had done so, the release of the brake and the spinning of the wheel would not have thrown him from the car. Respondent also contended that the brake was efficient and free from defects.

Shortly after the accident, the hand brake was inspected and operated by a number of persons familiar with hand brakes, all of whom testified that the brake was free from defects and operated efficiently and properly (R. 128, 170-172, 214, 231, 232, 254, 270, 271). In all, six foremen, car inspectors and car repairmen so testified.

Because the car was on a locked repair track and "not in use on its line," the trial court held as a matter of law that the Federal Safety Appliance Act was not violated, and refused to submit that issue to the jury. The Supreme Court of Minnesota affirmed this holding.

The case was submitted under the Federal Employers' Liability Act, and the questions of negligence and contributory negligence were given to the jury for its determination. The jury was instructed that the Railway Company was required to exercise ordinary care to see that its employee was furnished with a safe place in which to work and to exercise ordinary care to guard against defects or insufficiency of appliances (R. 299). The jury was also told that contributory negligence on the part of the petitioner would not bar a recovery, but, if present, would only diminish the damages in proportion to the amount of negligence attributable to the employee.

The verdict was in favor of respondent, and implicit in the verdict is the finding that the Railway Company was not negligent.

ARGUMENT

After a Defective Car Is Temporarily Removed from the Carrier's Line and Reaches the Place of Repair, the Provisions of the Safety Appliance Act Are Inapplicable.

The Safety Appliance Act, as amended in 1910, makes it unlawful for a common carrier "to haul, or permit to be hauled or used on its line, any car subject to the provisions of this Act not equipped with appliances" as provided therein. Whatever ambiguity may lurk in the phrase, "used on its line", it has been repeatedly held, with the tacit approval of this Court, that a car which has been withdrawn from a train and placed on a repair track for the purpose of

being repaired is not, *while undergoing repairs*, being "used on its line" within the meaning of the Act, and the defective or insecure condition of its appliances cannot be held to violate the Act.

New York, C. & St. L. R. Co. v. *Kelly* (CCA 7th), 70 F. 2d 548, certiorari denied 293 U. S. 595, 55 S. Ct. 110, 79 L. Ed. 689;

Sherry v. *Baltimore & O. R. Co.* (CCA 6th), 30 F. 2d 487, certiorari denied 280 U. S. 555, 50 S. Ct. 16, 74 L. Ed. 611;

Baltimore & O. R. Co. v. *Hooven* (CCA 6th), 297 F. 919;

McCalmont v. *Pennsylvania R. Co.* (CCA 6th), 283 F. 736;

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Compton v. *Southern Pac. Co.*, 70 Cal. App. 2d 267, 161 P. 2d 40;

Atlantic Coast Line R. Co. v. *Edge*, 81 Ga. App. 606, 59 S. E. 2d 533.

In *New York, C. & St. L. R. Co.* v. *Kelly*, 70 F. 2d 548, certiorari denied 293 U. S. 595, Kelly, a field brakeman in a yard crew, climbed upon a bad order car which had been removed from service and placed upon an established and segregated side track known as a repair track, for repair, and sustained injuries when he fell therefrom because of the absence of a handhold. The court held the Safety Appliance Act inapplicable upon the ground that the car was not "in use" within the meaning of the Act. It said, (p. 551):

> "Had the car in question been en route to the repair place, a different situation would have been presented, but after it reached the repair place, was out of service, the carrier was entirely within its rights in taking off

the handhold or any other of the safety appliances necessary to effect the repairs, without violating the Safety Appliance Act.

"Since it is so clear that the car was not in use, it was erroneous to submit the case to the jury; therefore it is unnecessary to consider the correctness of instructions under which it was sent to the jury."

In *Sherry* v. *Baltimore & O. R. Co.*, 30 F. 2d 487, certiorari denied 280 U. S. 555, the plaintiff was a car inspector employed by defendant, whose duty it was to inspect bad order cars, to make such repairs as could be made on the ground, or order a car to the repair shops for that purpose. He sustained injuries when he was thrown from a bad order car which had been cut from the train and placed upon one of the ladder tracks in the general yard while he was engaged in testing a brake on the car which had a badly bent brake staff. The court held the Safety Appliance Act inapplicable upon the ground that the defectively equipped car was not in use within the meaning of the Safety Appliance Act at the time of the injury to the plaintiff. The court said:

"In the instant case the defective car was not being hauled or used by the defendant, except in that it was stored temporarily upon one of the ladder tracks. It had been withdrawn from use for the very purpose of undergoing repair. No movement was immediately contemplated, and no action of setting the brakes was necessary, save as incident to inspection and repair. In *Chicago G. W. R. R. Co.* v. *Schendel*, cited supra in the note, the car was being placed upon a siding for the purpose of withdrawing it from use, but the Supreme Court specifically states that the use, movement, or hauling of the defective car, within the meaning of the statute, had not ended at the time of the accident. In *Texas*

& Pacific Ry. v. *Rigsby*, 241 U. S. 33, 42, 36 S. Ct. 482, 60 L. Ed. 874, the Supreme Court also refers to the question of use, and as pointed out in the McCalmont Case (page 739), this decision must be interpreted as based upon the theory that the taking of 'bad order' cars to the shops for repair is a 'part of the unitary journey of the car from the point of first discovery to the precise point of actual repair,' and therefore within the provision for continuance of civil liability under 45 U. S. C. § 13 (45 USCA § 13). *In none of the cases cited was liability held to attach after withdrawal from service had been completed and during the course of repair.*" (p. 489) (Emphasis supplied)

In *Baltimore & O. R. Co.* v. *Hooven*, 297 F. 919, the plaintiff, a machinist employed in defendant's roundhouse, was injured after making minor adjustments on top of the boiler of a locomotive temporarily withdrawn from service and undergoing minor repairs in the roundhouse in preparation for an early return to service, when he slipped and fell from the end of the steel runningboard because of the presence of oil thereon. The court held the Safety Appliance Act inapplicable upon the ground that, without stopping to consider whether a locomotive is a car within the meaning of the Safety Appliance Act, it is not the intent of the Act to have the absolute liability which it imposes attach to the vehicle "during such time as it is withdrawn temporarily from actual service and after it has reached the place of repair and is undergoing conditioning and repair for the purpose for which it is intended and for the use to which it is assigned."

In *McCalmont* v. *Pennsylvania R. Co.*, 283 F. 736, a car which had just been loaded for outbound shipment was found

to have at one end a coupler so defective that it would not work without repairs which could only be made at the shop. It was accordingly switched onto a track devoted wholly to use as a dead or storage track for the temporary holding of bad order cars which had to go to the shop for repairs. Plaintiff, a foreman of car inspectors for the defendant, was killed when he went under the car in order to adjust a chain coupling by which it had been attached to another car. The court held the Safety Appliance Act inapplicable upon the ground that "the car was wholly out of present use". It said:

> "In the present case no hauling was in progress or in immediate contemplation. The car was wholly out of present use. The original putting on of the chain and the further adjustment of the chain were in the nature of temporary repairs which would permit the car to be taken to the shop. and, so long as work of this character is not done as a part of the immediate operation of hauling to the shop, it does not seem important whether the expected interval before hauling is a few hours or a much longer time." (p. 739)

The holding of the Sixth and Seventh Circuits in *Baltimore & O. R. Co.* v. *Hooven* (CCA 6th), 297 F. 919, and *New York, C. & St. L. R. Co.* v. *Kelly* (CCA 7th), 70 F. 2d 548, was recognized by this Court and cited with apparent approval in *Brady* v. *Terminal R. R. Assn.*, 303 U. S. 10, 13. In that case Mr. Chief Justice Hughes, speaking for the Court, said:

> "The car had been brought into the yard at Granite City and placed on a receiving track temporarily pending the continuance of transportation. If not found to be defective, it would proceed to destination; if found defective, it would be subject to removal for repairs. *It is not a case where a defective car has reached a place of*

repair. See *Baltimore & Ohio R. Co.* v. *Hooven*, 297 Fed. 919, 921, 923; *New York, C. & St. L. R. Co.* v. *Kelly*, 70 F. (2d) 548, 551." (Emphasis supplied)

Another case in line with the above decisions is *Lyle* v. *Atchison, T. & S. F. Ry. Co.* (C. A. 7th), 177 F. 2d 221, certiorari denied 339 U. S. 913. In that case the locomotive involved had reached the roundhouse and had been turned over to plaintiff, a hostler's helper, for servicing with sand, water, fuel, oil, etc. After he had serviced the engine, plaintiff was injured while descending a ladder running from the top of the tender to the deck of the locomotive cab. Plaintiff sued to bring his case within the purview of the Boiler Inspection Act, 45 U. S. C. A. § 23, which contains language similar to that used in the Safety Appliance Act. Judgment was entered in favor of the plaintiff in the District Court but was reversed in the Court of Appeals, the latter court holding that the locomotive was not being "used" at the time of the injury. In the course of its opinion the Court of Appeals said:

> "Liability under the Act in question, like that under the Safety Appliance Act, 45 U.S.C.A. § 1 et seq., depends not upon negligence but is an absolute one to obey the statutory requirements. For this reason Congress, obviously, in framing each of the Acts, in consideration of the unconditional duty to have cars and locomotives in such condition as not to put in peril life or limb while in use imposed upon the carrier, likewise limited the absolute liability to cars and locomotives while in use 'on the line.' In other words, when a locomotive or car is in 'use on the line,' the mandatory duty of the carrier attaches and when the car or engine is not so in use then the duty under the express provision of the statute does not exist." (p. 222).

The specific question in the case at bar is whether or not a freight car removed from service to the extent that it is taken out of one of respondent's trains and put on the repair track for specified repairs is still "in use" within the meaning of the Safety Appliance Act. The foregoing cases clearly and unequivocally hold that such a car is not "in use" and the existence of defective or insecure appliances thereon does not violate the Act. Petitioner's counsel has failed to cite one single federal or state case which holds to the contrary.

The Fact That the Freight Car Involved in this Case Contained an Interstate Shipment Which Had Not Yet Reached Its Destination Is Wholly Immaterial.

Conceding that the car involved in this case was in interstate commerce because still loaded with an interstate shipment which had not yet reached its destination, that fact is entirely immaterial.

The statutory provision is: "It shall be unlawful * * * to haul, or permit to be hauled or used on its line, *any car*" not equipped with certain named safety appliances in good order. The Safety Appliance Act applies to all cars, interstate or intrastate, loaded or empty, and whether they be owned by respondent railroad or another when they are being hauled or used on its line. *Southern Ry. Co.* v. *United States*, 222 U. S. 20; *Texas & Pacific Ry. Co.* v. *Rigsby*, 241 U. S. 33; *Baltimore & O. R. Co.* v. *Hooven* (CCA 6th), 297 F. 919, 921.

In *Baltimore & O. R. Co.* v. *Hooven, supra,* the court said:

> "It must be borne in mind that the test of liability for injuries proximately resulting from a violation of the Safety Appliance Act is not the engagement of the

vehicle in interstate commerce, and the right of a private individual to recover for an injury resulting from a violation of this act is also not determined by the fact that at the time of injury such person was or was not engaged in interstate commerce. * * *

"The applicability of the act in specific instances and its constitutionality have been placed on broader ground than this, and the act is applicable to *all vehicles used on any railroad which is a highway of interstate commerce, whether the vehicles themselves are engaged in interstate commerce or not.* * * *

"*In actions under the Safety Appliance Act the statutory criterion is whether the car is 'in use' 'on its line,'* * * *" (p. 921) (Emphasis supplied)

The rule is clearly stated by this Court in *Brady* v. *Terminal R. R. Assn.*, 303 U. S. 10, 15, where this Court said:

"The breadth of the statutory requirements is shown by the fact that it embraces all locomotives, cars and similar vehicles used on any railway that is a highway of interstate commerce and is not confined exclusively to vehicles engaged in such commerce."

The obvious purpose of the Congress in wording the Act as it did was to be sure that it covered all cars while they were being hauled or used on the line. A defective brake on an empty car or on a car moving between two cities or towns within the same state is just as dangerous to an employee having to operate the brake as a defective brake on a car moving in interstate commerce. The statutory test is not whether the car was in interstate commerce but whether it was being "hauled or used on its line."

The Act is mandatory and makes the carrier absolutely liable for the death or injury of any railroad employee

caused by reason of the use or hauling on its line of any car with safety appliances which are defective or insecure or which are not maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Act. Accordingly, Congress in framing the Act limited the absolute liability to cars and locomotives while in actual use on the carrier's line. In other words, when a car is in "use on the line", the mandatory duty and absolute liability of the carrier attach, and when the car is not in use, then the duty, under the express provision of the statute, does not exist. The Congress realized that appliances do wear out so that they must be repaired, and that the railroad company should have an opportunity to make repairs without being subject to absolute liability. The repairing of safety appliances on a car which has been removed from the line and placed upon a repair track, is, therefore, not a "use" of the car on the carrier's line but is an act in compliance with, and not in violation of, the law. *Lyle* v. *Atchison, T. & S. F. Ry. Co.* (C. A. 7th), 177 F. 2d 221, certiorari denied 339 U. S. 913.

It is pertinent to note that in Sec. 13 of the Act (45 USCA § 13) Congress exempted the carriers from statutory criminal penalties while a defective car was being hauled from a place on the line where the defect was discovered to the place of repair. However, it specifically provided that such movement or hauling of the car was at the sole risk of the carrier in so far as any remedial action for the death or injury of any railroad employee is concerned. No similar provision covering a defective car after it had reached the place of repair can be found in the law. This omission is indicative of the intent of Congress to exempt the carrier from the provisions of the Act after the car had reached the place of repair. *New York, C. & St. L. R. Co.* v. *Kelly*, 70 F. 2d 548, certiorari denied 293 U. S. 595.

Cases Arising Under the Safety Appliance Act Should Not Be Confused With Those Arising Under the Federal Employers' Liability Act.

The case at bar was submitted to the jury under the provisions of the Federal Employers' Liability Act (R. 297), and while respondent contended that it was free from negligence, it at no time challenged the applicability of that Act. In fact, respondent admitted in its answer that petitioner was employed in interstate commerce (Paragraph III of Complaint admitted by Paragraph I of Answer, R. 1, 5). Prior to the 1939 amendment of the Federal Employers' Liability Act, it was necessary for a railway employee to bring himself within the "moment of injury rule" before he could claim the benefit of the Federal Employers' Liability Act. The test was whether or not at the time of the injury, the employee was engaged in interstate transportation or in work so closely related to it as to be practically a part of it. *Shanks* v. *Del., Lack. & West. R. R.*, 239 U. S. 556; *Chi., Burlington & Q. R. R.* v. *Harrington*, 241 U. S. 177, and *So. Pac. Co.* v. *Industrial Accident Comm.*, 251 U. S. 259.

Petitioner's counsel has cited a great many cases arising under the Federal Employers' Liability Act where the issue was whether or not the plaintiff was engaged in interstate commerce at the time of the accident so as to be entitled to the benefits of that Act. Those cases are not in point here and counsel's citation of them only tends to confuse.

Counsel also cites *Minneapolis, St. P. & S. Ste. M. R.* v. *Goneau*, 269 U. S. 406; *Great Northern Ry. Co.* v. *Otos*, 239 U. S. 349; *Delk* v. *St. Louis & San Francisco R. R.*, 220 U. S. 580; *Chicago, M. & St. P. Ry. Co.* v. *Voelker* (8 Cir.), 129 F.

522; *Erie R. Co.* v. *Russell* (2 Cir.), 183 F. 722; *Cusson* v. *Canadian Pac. Ry. Co.* (CCA 2nd), 115 F. 2d 430, and *New Orleans & N. E. R. Co.* v. *Jackson*, 140 Miss. 375, 105 So. 770, in which the Safety Appliance Act was held applicable, but in none of them had the defective car reached the repair track. They relate to accidents which occurred while the car was being switched in the yards, while it was stopped on the mainline, while it was in the process of being removed to a repair track, or while it was standing on a siding as distinguished from a repair track. These cases are inapposite.

REASONS WHY THE WRIT SHOULD BE DENIED

1. The decision of the Supreme Court of Minnesota is clearly right. It adopted and followed the interpretation of the Safety Appliance Act which has been enunciated by the courts since the effective date of the Act. If the Act is now to be enlarged so as to cover appliances on bad order cars which have reached the repair track and are undergoing repairs, that change should be made by the Legislature rather than the Court.

2. There is no conflict of decision. All of the cases which we have been able to find, both state and federal, hold the Safety Appliance Act inapplicable under similar facts. Petitioner has cited no case to the contrary.

3. There is no important question of Federal law. Since the enactment of the Act on April 14, 1910 (c. 160, § 2, 36 Stat. 298), the Federal courts, without exception, have held that after a defective car reaches a place of repair, the Safety

Appliance Act is not applicable for the car is not then "in use on its line." This interpretation is fair and just for it permits the railroad to comply with the law by repairing its cars without being held as an insurer of the safety of its employees.

4. Petitioner was denied no federal right. His case was submitted to the jury under the provisions of the Federal Employers' Liability Act and his rights under that Act were clearly and fully explained to the jury by the trial court. Under the facts of his case, he was not entitled to any rights under the Safety Appliance Act.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the petition for a writ of certiorari in this case should be denied.

Respectfully submitted,

M. L. COUNTRYMAN, JR.
EARL F. REQUA
Counsel for Respondent

August 7, 1953.

INDEX

Subject Index

	Page
Petitioner's reply brief	1
Respondent's authorities are not analogous to the case at bar	1
The provisions of the Safety Appliance Act apply to all cars in use by the railroad on its line; temporary interruptions of travel do not take cars out of the scope of the Act	3
A loaded box car under original bills of lading on a rip track for running repairs is in use by the railroad company	3
A car on a rip track owned by the railroad and controlled by the road which track is necessary to the operation of the road is on the railroad line	5
Construction and application of the Act must be broad and liberal in view of its remedial nature	5
Conclusion	8

Table of Cases Cited

Astor v. *Merritt*, 111 U. S. 202	4
Atlantic Coast Line R. Co. v. *Edge*, 59 S. E. (2d) 533	1
Baltimore & O. R. Co. v. *Hooven*, 297 F. 919	2
Bastian v. *State*, 104 Misc. 287, 175 N.Y. Supp. 564	4
Board of Trade of the City of Chicago v. *Olson*, 262 U. S. 1	3
Brady v. *Terminal R. R. Assn.*, 303 U. S. 10	2
Byler v. *Wabash R. Co.*, 196 F. (2d) 9	5
Chesapeake & Ohio R. Co. v. *U. S.*, 249 F. 805	5, 6
Compten v. *So. Pac. Co.*, 70 Cal. App. (2d) 267	2
Coray v. *Southern Pac. Ry.*, 335 U. S. 520, 93 L. Ed. 208	6
Fairport v. *Meredith*, 292 U. S. 589	6
Kaminski v. *Chicago, M. St. P. & P. R. Co.*, 180 Minn. 519	2

	Page
Lilly v. *Grand Trunk*, 317 U. S. 481	6
Lyle v. *Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co.*, 177 F. (2d) 221	2
Missouri K-T. R. Co., of Texas v. *Ridgeway*, 191 F. (2d) 363	5
McCalmont v. *Pennsylvania R. Co.*, 283 F. 736	1
Moore v. *American Transport Co.*, 65 U. S. 1, 24 Howard 1	4
Morgan's Louisiana and T. R. & S. S. Co. v. *Aucoin*, 73 So. 859	5
Myers v. *Reading Co.*, 331 U. S. 469	5
New York, C. & St. L. R. Co. v. *Kelly*, 70 F. (2d) 548, 293 U. S. 595, 55 S. Ct. 110, 79 L. Ed. 689	2
Schlemmer v. *Buffalo, Rochester & C. Ry.*, 205 U. S. 1	5
Sherry v. *Baltimore & O. R. Co.*, 30 F. (2d) 487, 280 U. S. 55	1
St. Louis, I. M. & So. R. Co. v. *Taylor*, 210 U. S. 281	6
Texas & Pacific Ry. v. *Rigsby*, 241 U. S. 33	2
U. S. v. *Dickson*, 15 Peters 141	7

STATUTES AND AUTHORITIES CITED

Black's Law Dictionary	3
Report No. 250 of the Commitee on Interstate Commerce, 61st Congress, Senate Reports, Vol. 1, Misc. 1	7
Safety Appliance Act	1, 2, 7

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER TERM, 1953

No. 84

LOUIS H. NETZER,

Petitioner,

vs.

NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY,

A CORPORATION

PETITIONER'S REPLY BRIEF

Respondent's Authorities Are Not Analogous to the Case at Bar

Respondent cites several cases, 10 in number, to support its contention, that after a defective car is removed from the carrier's line and reaches the place of repair, the provisions of the Safety Appliance Act are inapplicable. Respondent also contends that the cases cited are controlling as to the case at bar.

This is not true as the cases are readily distinguishable. Three of the cases cited, *Sherry* v. *Baltimore & O. R. Co.*, 30 F. (2d) 487, certiorari denied 280 U. S. 55, *McCalmont* v. *Pennsylvania R. Co.*, 283 F. 736, and *Atlantic Coast Line R. Co.* v. *Edge*, 59 S. E. (2d) 533, deal with actions which arose during repairs to *known defective safety appliances,*

the cause of action being based on the defective condition of the very appliance being repaired. As stated in *Baltimore & O. R. Co.* v. *Hooven*, 297 F. 919:

> "The act of equipping the vehicles originally with the safety appliances and the act of repairing an appliance which becomes defective in use are acts in compliance with and not in violation of the law."

With the law above stated and applied in the above cases petitioner agrees, *but* in the case at bar the petitioner was not repairing a defective appliance nor did he have knowledge that the appliance was defective.

Two of the cases cited, *Kaminski* v. *Chicago M. St. P. & P. R. Co.*, 180 Minn. 519 and *New York, C. & St. L. R. Co.* v. *Kelly*, (CCA 7th), 70 F. (2d) 548, certiorari denied 293 U. S. 595, 55 S. Ct. 110, 79 L. Ed. 689, arose as a result of a defective safety appliance on cars in a repair yard for general repairs, including repairs to the appliance of said cars. In the *Kaminski* case the repair consisted of entirely dismantling the car and practically rebuilding it.

In two of the cases cited, *Texas & Pacific Ry.* v. *Rigsby*, 241 U. S. 33 and *Brady* v. *Terminal R. R. Assn.*, 303 U. S. 10, the Safety Appliance Act was held applicable.

The remaining three cases cited, *Lyle* v. *Atchison T. & S. F. R. Co.*, 177 F. (2d) 221, *B. & O. R. Co.* v. *Hooven*, 297 F. 919, and *Compten* v. *So. Pac. Co.*, 70 Cal. Ap. (2d) 267, are different for the reason that they involved locomotives in the roundhouse for repairs and not assigned to any particular service after the repairs had been made on them.

In none of the cases cited by respondent, did the cars remain under the original bill of lading.

In none of the cases cited did the cars remain loaded while mere running repairs were made which did not involve repairs of safety appliances.

The Provisions of the Safety Appliance Act Apply to All Cars in Use by the Railroad on Its Line; Temporary Interruptions of Travel Do Not Take Cars Out of the Scope of the Act.

In *Board of Trade of the City of Chicago et al.* v. *Olson*, 262 U. S. 1, 33, Mr. Chief Justice Taft stated:

> "The right to remove grain at Chicago for temporary purposes or storage, inspecting, weighing, grading or mixing and changing the ownership, consignee or destination and then to continue the shipment under the same contract and at a through rate. . . . does not take it out of interstate commerce in such a way as to deprive Congress of the power to regulate it . . ." (See plaintiff's petition for other citations on temporary interruptions as not removing goods from interstate commerce).

A Loaded Box Car Under Original Bills of Lading on a Rip Track for Running Repairs Is In Use by the Railroad Company.

Cyc. Vol. 39, p. 846, defines "use" as follows:

> "B. As a verb. To make use of; to convert to one's own service; to avail one's self of, to employ; to put to a purpose; to accustom; to habituate; to employ, to hold, to occupy, to enjoy or take the benefit of; to make use of, to put to a purpose; to employ for the attainment of some purpose or end; to avail one's self of; to make use of; to employ for any purpose; to make use of; to convert to one's service; to avail one's self of; to employ; to put to a purpose; to make use of; to put to use; to avail one's self of; to put to a purpose; to employ for the accomplishment of a purpose; to turn to account; to make use of; to treat."

Black's Law Dictionary defines "use" as follows:

> "To make use of, to convert to one's service, to avail one's self of, to employ."

In *Moore et al.* v. *American Transportation Co.*, 65 U. S. 1, 37, 24 Howard 1, Mr. Justice Nelson, speaking for the court said:

> "The word *used* means, in the connection found, employed. . . ."

In *Astor* v. *Merritt*, 111 U. S. 202, 213, Mr. Justice Blatchford, speaking for the court, said:

> "If a person residing in the United States should purchase wearing apparel here, in a condition ready for immediate wear without further manufacture, intended for his own use or wear, suitable for the immediately approaching season of the year . . . . no one would hesitate to say that such wearing apparel was in 'actual use' by such person, even though some of it might not have been actually put on or applied to its proper personal use. . . . 'in use' is defined to be 'in employment'; out of use to be 'not in employment'; these definitions aid in showing that it is too narrow a construction of the word 'in actual use', as applied to this case to say that they require that the wearing apparel should have been actually worn."

In *Bastian* v. *State*, 104 Misc. 287, 175 N. Y. Supp. 564, 566, the court said:

> "The word use in this statute should have its ordinary meaning."

Petitioner respectfully submits that a box car or other railroad freight car is originally built for one purpose, that is to be loaded with goods for the purpose of carrying said goods in commerce. *When the car is thus loaded with goods, it is in use within the above definition. It remains in use or is used until the goods are unloaded.* Respondent, on page 10 of its brief, concedes that the car involved herein was "in interstate commerce because still loaded with an interstate shipment". If the car is in interstate commerce, it is certainly put to use, employed, made use of or em-

ployed for the attainment of some end or purpose by the railroad within the above definitions. It is, therefore, in use by the railroad if for no other purpose, as a temporary storage place for the interstate goods.

A Car on a Rip Track Owned by the Railroad and Controlled by the Road Which Track Is Necessary to the Operation of the Road Is on the Railroad Line.

In *Morgan's Louisiana and T. R. & S. S. Co.* v. *Aucoin,* 73 So. 859, the court defines a railroad line as follows:

> "A railroad line as I understand it, is made up of one or more main tracks, with the necessary side tracks, switches, signal blocks, and such other appurtenances as may be necessary to the operation of the railroad."

See also *Myers* v. *Reading Co.,* 331 U. S. 469; *Missouri K-T R. Co. of Texas* v. *Ridgeway,* 191 F. (2d) 363 (Reversed on other grounds); and *Byler* v. *Wabash R. Co.,* 196 F. (2d) 9, for cases in which the Safety Appliance Act was applied to cars either standing or moving in a railroad yard. Petitioner respectfully submits that to restrict the word "line" as used in the Safety Appliance Act to mean anything less inclusive than the above given definition would be to abort the purpose of the Safety Appliance Act. Most accidents involving safety appliances occur in railroad yards. Citing

Chesapeake & O. R. Co. v. *U. S.,* 249 F. 805, in which the court said:

> "The Safety Appliance Act as originally passed being remedial and humanitarian in its purpose, is broadly construed."

Construction and Application of the Act Must Be Broad and Liberal in View of Its Remedial Nature

In the case of *Schlemmer* v. *Buffalo, Rochester, & C. Ry.,* 205 U. S. 1, 10, Mr. Justice Holmes said:

> "The words 'used in moving interstate traffic' should not be taken in a narrow sense."

In speaking of an injury, the court in *St. Louis, I. M. & So. R. Co.* v. *Taylor,* 210 U. S. 281, 295, said:

> "If it must be borne entirely by he who suffers it, that is a hardship to him, if its burden is transferred, as far as it is capable of transferrence, to the employer, it is a hardship to him. It is quite conceivable that Congress, contemplating the inevitable hardships of this injury and hoping to diminish the economic loss to the community resulting from them, should deem it wise to impose their burdens upon those who could measurably control their causes instead of on those who are in the main helpless in that regard. Such a policy would be intelligible, and to say the least, not so unreasonable as to require us to doubt that it was intended and to seek some unnatural interpretation of common words."

In *Lilly* v. *Grand Trunk,* 317 U. S. 481, 486, the court said:

> "The purpose of the act is to protect employees and the public and it must be construed in the light of its remedial purposes."

In *Coray* v. *Southern Pacific Ry.,* 335 U. S. 520, 93 L. Ed. 208, 210, the court stated:

> "* * * and this act, fairly interpreted must be held to protect all who need protection from dangerous results due to maintenance or operation of congressionally prohibited defective appliances."

See also *Chesapeake & O. R. Co.* v. *U. S., supra,* and *Fairport* v. *Meredith,* 292 U. S. 589.

Respondent notes that Section 13 of the Act exempts carriers from criminal liability while a defective car is being hauled from a place on the line to a place of repair and that no provision is made covering a defective car after it has reached the point of repair. Respondent then states that "this is indicative of the intent of Congress to exempt the carrier from the provisions of the Act after the car

has reached the place of the repair." Petitioner merely further notes that Section 13 does not apply to defective cars generally but to "hauling cars with equipment (Safety Appliance) which is discovered to be defective enroute". The section deals exclusively with cars that are discovered to have defective safety appliances. Petitioner certainly does not claim that the Safety Appliance Act applies during the time a defective safety appliance is being repaired. Such repair is in compliance with and not in violation of the law. But, by the same reasoning it cannot be said that the Safety Appliance Act does not apply during a running repair to a part of the car other than a safety appliance if by reason of a defective safety appliance an employee is injured.

The intent of Congress in passing the amendment to Section 13 is clearly expressed in report #250, Feb. 18, 1910, by Mr. Elkins of the Committee on Interstate Commerce, 61st Congress, Senate Reports, Vol. 1., Misc. 1. It will be noted that the intent of Congress was not to limit the rights of employees to recover for injuries sustained under the Safety Appliance Act. Mr. Elkins stated:

> "It is but just that the risk of working *about,* and the movement of defective equipment should be borne by the carrier."

As to the proper interpretation of the above proviso, petitioner is reminded of what Justice Storey in *U. S.* v. *Dickson,* 15 Peters U. S. 141, 163, had to say:

> "We are led to the general rule of law, which has always prevailed, and become consecrated almost as a maxim in the interpretation of statutes; that where an enacting clause is general in its language, and object, and a proviso is afterwards introduced, that proviso is construed strictly, and takes no case out of the enacting clause which does not fall fairly within its terms."

Conclusion

Petitioner respectfully requests that the petition for certiorari be granted.

Respectfully submitted,

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14

FILED

IN THE

Supreme Court of the United States

October Term, A. D. 1952

No. [redacted] 84

LOUIS E. NEITZEL,

Petitioner,

vs.

NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY,

Respondent.

MOTION OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF RAILROAD TRAINMEN FOR LEAVE TO INTERVENE FOR THE PURPOSE OF FILING BRIEF IN THE ABOVE CAUSE AS AMICUS CURIAE

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Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen.

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IN THE

Supreme Court of the United States

OCTOBER TERM, A. D. 1952

No. 817

LOUIS B. NETZER,

Petitioner,

vs.

NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY,

Respondent.

MOTION OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF RAILROAD TRAINMEN FOR LEAVE TO INTERVENE FOR THE PURPOSE OF FILING BRIEFS IN THE ABOVE CAUSE AS AMICUS CURIAE.

To the Honorable, the Supreme Court of the United States.

The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen—a Railroad Labor Organization—by Edward B. Henslee, Sr. and Melvin L. Griffith, its attorneys in this behalf, respectfully moves the Court:

> For leave to intervene in the above cause for the purpose of filing briefs upholding the right of Louis B. Netzer and those of its members similarly situated to the benefits of The Federal Safety Appliance Acts and of The Federal Employers Liability Act in this and in other similar cases.

EDWARD B. HENSLEE, SR.,
MELVIN L. GRIFFITH,
Attorneys for The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE FOREGOING MOTION

The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen is a voluntary railroad labor organization with a membership of approximately two hundred and twenty thousand members. Included in its membership are brakemen, switchmen, conductors and other service employees.

This is a case pending in this Court involving important questions arising under The Federal Safety Appliance Acts and The Federal Employers Liability Act in which Brotherhood members are interested and upon which the highest courts of the states have reached different conclusions. The decision in the instant case is contrary to the decisions of other state courts and to principles announced by this Court which are declaratory of the intention of Congress in enacting these laws and of the interest of railroad men and of the general public in their proper administration.

The Court is respectfully requested to allow this motion for the purpose of permitting counsel for movant to file briefs in its behalf in which the questions of law involved may be argued together with their bearing upon the interests of movant's membership in this and similar cases which may arise and that of the general public therein may be presented.

Respectfully submitted,

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